



No. 15

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## Views Of A Recipient

BY DEAN DAVIS

(Mr. Davis has been a subscriber since the inception of FSCN, and as far as I know one of the few who are, or were, legally entitled to hold Food Stamps. For many of us being "on Food Stamps" is something outside our experience. Because of that some of us will naturally classify recipients as "those people", persons different from ourselves. But there is a price to pay for receiving Food Stamps other than cash as Mr. Davis shows us. When it is Mr. Davis, who is one of us, then the experience comes much closer to home. Ed.)

August 26, 1983  
Poughkeepsie, New York

Dear Jerry:

I have tried to write this letter for some time. You might be able to use it in your Food Stamp Newsletter. I finally broke a habit that lasted almost nine years. In 1974 I was really bad off, money-wise, trying to make ends meet. Then I heard of a thing called Food Stamps. I almost said no! not me. I won't go on welfare. But I finally went and got an application. Took all my bills to a person who would interview me.

I got to the County Office Building and found the right floor. On the way up I had an awful feeling in my stomach. It seemed everyone knew where I was going. It took about an hour to get in and see someone to interview me. Since then for an interview the shortest time waiting was 10-15 minutes, but also up to three hours. I likened that place to an overcrowded, impersonal sweat chamber. When they moved to another building it became a zoo. All the trash walked in - the language, smoking, and filth. Even drug addicts and pimps with their ladies (It has gotten better). They even had to cage in the people at the front desk due

to two incidents of beating up the people who take the applications before you are interviewed. Also the Dutchess County Sheriffs are present and undercover Poughkeepsie Police.

When time came to get my first allotment of Food Stamps I went to a local bank in Poughkeepsie. Back then you had to pay for Food Stamps, like \$50 for \$150, or some sort of percentage figured out by the individual person interviewing you. The people behind the desks at the banks had an attitude of being - "I'm better than you, and why should you be getting this?" The people at the Food Stamp Office were always courteous about any question asked. A few years later you didn't have to pay for Food Stamps. Now people at the bank don't care just as long as you have your card. We have a check cashing place in Poughkeepsie and the lines come the 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The line is right out to the street. The people behind the window are really strict. They are usually two men who take their time and make you feel like two cents.

Back when I got my first stamps it was hard trying to find a store that would accept them. It is not like now. You had to ask and 50% of the time they told us no. I'm not sure if they wanted the people, black and white trash, as I heard once in their stores.

In my area Shop-Rite, Grand Union, then A & P - and finally almost every store in the area now take Food Stamps. Back when I started I looked at some of the old 50¢ coupons and saved some, but not any covers. I remember an old A & P in my town (now gone) would not accept a 1¢, 5¢ or 25¢ Food Stamp Scrip from an A & P in White Plains (NY). We had to sneak them in between their own. I wish I had some of them now.

I can remember the registers were not set up to key in on Food Stamp items, so you had to tell them you were using Food Stamps. Most of the Cashiers, if you had been talking with them earlier, would change and become downright hostile. Some were nasty. They would take your book and pull the coupons from the book. I would never let them do this. I would intimidate them and even try harrassing them if they started in on me. Finally, the Cash Registers got automated, then it was easier.

Also when you received your change they would push you to the side, call the Head Cashier and ask for change for a \$5 or \$10 Food Stamp, and take the next person while you were waiting and getting very embarrassed. They would put their blinking light on, so this held up others behind you. If the Cashier had tokens, you would only cause a slight delay. Only the person behind you knew you had Food Stamps. I was behind a Food Stamp person, I would play along with the Cashier and they would give me a look like - "See, this person is trash!" Then I would give him my Food Stamps and let him feel like Two Cents.

Maybe my wife could write her side. I've been off Food Stamps since May. Granted it's somewhat hard to feed six children and two adults on \$160 every two weeks. The people in the program were o.k., and now I thank them because I did get a benefit.

Yours truly,

Dean Davis

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From what I have seen the following kind of letter is the one we are more likely to see. It comes from a Nebraska newspaper of January, 1982.

"TAXPAYER MERITS FOOD STAMP CHANGE

La Vista, Nebraska

Nothing is more irritating than to go grocery shopping and find the persons in front of you paying in Food Stamps and getting cash back in change. They then turn around and go back into the store and purchase beer, pop, cigarettes, dog food, etc. with the change they received.



"Why doesn't the Welfare Department go back to giving tokens for change or give the cash back to the taxpayers? After all, we paid for the Food Stamps to begin with.

B.B. Krzycki"

It is too bad that Mr. Krzycki didn't have an opportunity to read Mr. Davis' letter and get some idea of the price in dignity and pride that is paid by many legitimately eligible to receive Stamps. Ed.

Some collectors and dealers have legitimately held an interest in Food Stamps as collectible items. However, under Federal regulations such a thing is not to be. Another of the long time subscribers to FSCN is paper money collector Len Roosmalen of Middleton, Wisconsin. In 1980 he opened a coin shop and made an effort to show his interest in Food Stamps. Ed.

#### BANK NOTE REPORTER, April 1980

#### "U.S.D.A. CONFISCATES DEALER'S FOOD STAMPS

Paper money collectors whomiss the black market activity in which hobby transactions of U.S. Gold Certificates were cloaked from 1933-64 might try collecting U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Coupons - commonly known as Food Stamps - to bring back some of the thrill of collecting.

"In kind of an ironic switch on the usual state of financial affairs involving the collecting of paper money, if you are well enough off to afford to feed your family without government assistance, you're too rich to collect Food Stamps. Conversely the only persons who can legally collect Food Stamps are those who need them for more important things - like buying food.

"Unless a collector is registered with his county as an official recipient of Food Stamps, or unless he is a grocer who is certified to accept the stamps, any Food Stamps in his possession are liable to confiscation by the U.S.D.A.

"Long-time paper money collector Len Roosmalen found out just how rigidly that arrangement is enforced on Feb. 22 when U.S.D.A. agents raided his newly-opened coin shop in Middleton, Wis (a Madison suburb) and seized \$39.50 face value worth of obsolete and current Food Stamps on display in his shop. 'Apparently someone had told them I had the coupons because they came in looking for ' Roosmalen told BANK NOTE REPORTER.

"The dealer said he could understand the seizure of Food Stamps being bought and sold at under face value in order to subvert the intention of the program to put food on tables where it was needed, but he said he does not understand why the selling of Food Stamps for over face value, or especially of obsolete Food Stamps no longer redeemable, should be discouraged. 'I could understand it in Washington or New York where they buy 'em and sell 'em like airline discount tickets,' Roosmalen said, 'but I didn't think they would make such a big deal of it here.'

"While it is possible that some Food Stamps on the numismatic market come directly from recipients of that form of government assistance; the usual channel is through grocers who sell a few pieces at face value to collector or dealer friends, rather than turning them back in to the government for redemption and destruction.

"Roosmalen feels there is sufficient justification for allowing collectors to own and trade in Food Stamps to preserve specimens for future generations. 'People later on would like to see what this program was all about', the dealer said. He likens the collecting of Food Stamps today to the preservation of WWII era ration tokens, coupons, etc. a hobby specialty which claims an enthusiastic group of avid collectors. Though he tried to explain this philosophy to the U.S.D.A. Agents confiscating his Food Stamps, Roosmalen said 'I didn't impress them.'



"Indeed, neither the agent who confiscated the Food Stamps nor the agriculture department's public information officers seem to be impressed by such arguments or even to understand why a person would want to collect Food Stamps as substitute currency.

"The U.S.D.A. agent who seized the stamps from Roosmalen's shop, Food Program Specialist C. Brandstedter, would not talk to BNR about the incident, referring all calls to the U.S.D.A. Chicago Central Office's public information officer.

"Victor Omelczenko, of the Chicago Office, did talk with BNR, but only in general terms of Federal legislation regarding who is eligible to possess Food Stamps. He offered collectors no hope of being able to openly buy, sell or display food coupons without risking confiscation.

"While many Food Stamp collectors are cognizant of these regulations and keep their activities underground, others may not be aware that they risk the confiscation of their collection and worse if they choose to try to preserve this unique form of U.S. paper currency."

Another article which sums up many of the issues raised above was presented in the the Sacramento Bee, early in the 1960's.

SACRAMENTO BEE, Jan. 14, 1971

#### "FOOD STAMP PROGRAM HAS BOOSTED BUYING POWER OF COUNTY'S POOR

by C.L. Moriwaki

"The federal Food Stamp program has increased the buying power of low income families in Sacramento County by more than \$9 million in 1970 and helped prop up a faltering food industry here.

"In 1970 about 24,000 local families were able to eat well-balanced, nutritious meals as a result of this US Department of Agriculture-administered plan, which began as an experimental project in Rochester, NY almost 32 years ago.

"The present program has been extended until July, 1973. The bill President Nixon signed this week contains a number of liberal provisions which may increase participation nationally from 8.8 million to as many as 13 million persons.

#### "How It Works

"Sacramento County's Food Stamp program began in March, 1969. By California law the county welfare department administers it for USDA. Welfare workers are responsible for determining the eligibility of each applicant according to USDA guidelines.

"Virtually all welfare recipients are automatically eligible for Food Stamps, although participation is completely voluntary. Low-income families and individuals not on welfare are also considered for Food Stamps. Retired persons on fixed incomes as well as needy college students, for example, could qualify for the program, provided their financial assets do not exceed a level fixed by a complex set of USDA regulations.

"Persons accepted in the program can buy Food Stamps in 50 Cents, \$2 and \$5 denominations at banks or credit unions participating in the program. They also receive 'bonus' coupons - extra stamps - free. The coupons are then used like cash

"Ellá Boyce, for example, has has a total monthly income of \$290 from Social Security, Aid To The Totally Disabled and child-support money from her ex-husband. The Oak Park resident goes to her bank at the beginning of each month, spends \$36 on Food Stamps and receives an additional \$20 in 'bonus' coupons. This gives her the means to provide herself and her



15-Year old son with an adequate diet.

" 'No question about it. I do get more food and we do eat better,' she says. 'I can buy a whole chicken now instead of chicken legs and chicken backs. You also have a tendency to save your money for food, you know, not spend it on something else, because this is the only thing you can purchase with Food Stamps. That in itself is a benefit. I'm not the greatest money manager in the world.'

"But like many participants in the Food Stamp plan, Mrs. Boyce has numerous complaints about its strict rules and regulations. 'One thing that really annoys me about the program is that I can buy Coke or candy, but I can't get vitamins. To me a vitamin tablet is more essential than a candy bar.'

"Another problem with the stamp system, says Mrs. Boyce, is the way Food coupons stamp their users as poor. 'Sometimes you hold up people in line behind you because grocery clerks have to take the stamps and stamp each one before putting it in the drawer. And they have to separate the Food Stamp items from, let's say, your paper items and what-have-you. I kind of hate to go into a store where they don't know me. I know it embarrasses my son to go with me when I use them.'

### "Grocers Happy

"Grocers, on the other hand, seem delighted over the extra money they get from Food Stamp sales. County welfare department figures show that in 1970 24,079 households paid \$8,305,224 for stamps, and received \$9,172,315 in 'bonus' coupons for a total of \$17,477,539. All this was earmarked for food only.

"Donald C. Beaver, Executive Director of the Northern California Grocers Association, says the Food Stamp program has increased Sacramento County store sales by at least 8 per cent since it began 22 months ago. 'This can be compared to bringing in a pretty good size volume of new industry,' he says. 'It would be a near disastrous situation, to tell you the truth, if Sacramento County didn't have this program. Now there is virtually no grocer I know that is not participating in the program,' says Beaver, whose association represents some 300 food stores in Sacramento County.

"Serving both the grocers and Food Stamp users are local banks. They have agreed to sell Food Stamps to recipients, charging the county and federal government a service fee for each transaction (This operation was later changed as Mr. Davis noted. Ed). ... There were about 345,000 transactions in 1970 costing some \$289,000, the money coming equally from the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare and county coffers. Grocers pay banks a service fee when they deposit food coupons in their accounts.

"The Food Stamp program has gone through a number of phases since its experimental days in 1939. President John F. Kennedy set up pilot programs in 22 states in 1961. Lyndon Johnson signed the Food Stamp Act into law on Aug. 31, 1964. And President Nixon has included the program in welfare reform proposal. Some program changes have met with harsh criticism. For example stamp users can now receive up to 49 cents cash as change from food coupon sales. (This was before the token and scrip requirement was introduced. Ed). The rule applies to each transaction.

### "Abuses Feared

"Some say the new policy is good because it allows recipients to build up cash for non-food items such as vitamins, soap and other bathroom articles. Others say the policy is bad because it can lead to abuses: recipients might use their coupons to buy liquor and cigarettes. The Food Stamp program faces other charges of abuse. Gov. Ronald Reagan has asserted Food Stamps are 'being perverted to subsidize hippie communes.'



"Some critics claim there is a high rate of cheating. County Welfare Director William Hay has admitted there probably are persons in the area getting stamps when they are not entitled to them, but 'Our emphasis is on serving. We are less concerned about abuse in the stamp program than in other areas, perhaps because it involves getting more to eat.'

"the amount of illegal activity in the local program apparently is unknown, but Hay says it most likely would cost many times more than what is being lost to find and prosecute the cheaters."

#### NOTES ON THE 1939-43 PROGRAM

Alon Jeffrey as usual has been quietly researching background information on various aspects of the Food Stamp Programs. One of the regulations governing the giving of change in 1939 was presented this way:

"Sec. 204. CHANGE. No retail food store merchant, and no manager, clerk, assistant or other person acting for him, shall give change in currency or otherwise in connection with food delivered for food order stamps; provided, however, that if such merchant or person so desires, he may extend credit for future delivery of food or surplus food, as the case may be, for the balance of the face value of an orange colored or blue surplus food order stamp, if the food delivered is of a value less than either a single stamp or a multiple thereof."

The regulation does not mention the use of tokens or scrip, but certainly does not exclude them as such are simply forms of credit.

#### Some History

"On May 16, 1939, the first Food Stamps were bought in Rochester (NY) by Mabel McFiggin. Food Stamps were purchased by 2,242 others that day. Joseph Mutolo was the first grocer to redeem stamps. The commodities on the first blue stamp list were butter, eggs, white and grain flour, corn meal, oranges, grapefruit, dried prunes, and dried beans, but the list of surplus food included, at one time or another: butter, eggs, flour, rice, corn, meal, hominy grits, peaches, pears, apples, oranges, grapefruit, dried prunes, raisins, peas, tomatoes, snap beans, onions, dry beans, pork and lard."

"On June 3, FSCC (Federal Supplies Commodities Corporation) directors satisfied with the program's operations announced its extension to Dayton (OH). Four days later the plan was begun there with about the same degree of success as in Rochester.

"On June 21, Milo Perkins commented:

'The stamp plan has been in operation in Rochester for about a month, while it has been working in Dayton for only a couple of weeks. It is too early, therefore, to tell you much about its results. I do, however, want to give you a picture of participation in Rochester where the plan has been in operation over two pay periods. There are 10,500 cases eligible to buy orange stamps and 3,500 WPA workers eligible to ask that the cost of the orange stamps be deducted from their pay checks. Nearly 15 percent of these cases are single persons, and since the stamp plan is best suited to families, we would consider that we had complete participation in Rochester if 3,000 WPA families bought the stamps and 9,000 families in other categories of public assistance purchased them. ... "

Collectors can start searching for FSC tokens from at least Rochester and Dayton with some possibility of finding early issues.

My book, FOOD STAMP CHANGE TOKEN STORES, is still available to subscribers of the FSCN at \$8 each, or \$9 for non-subscribers. Just make your check out to Jerry F. Schimmel and mail it in.

## MAVERICKS SERIES

Beginning with the next issue the FSCN will be devoted mainly to a Mavericks listing of sets published in the TAMS JOURNAL several years ago. These are the auctions posted by the Christensen and Stone firm and which ran for a couple of years. It will be the first of a rather major effort in this direction.

Please continue to send your mavericks to Alon for identification. It's free to members.

## NEW SUBSCRIBER

Ronald H. Walker, Sr.  
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## NEW ADDRESS

Henry C. Keene, Jr.  
2051 Sea Level Drive #305  
Ketchikan AK 99901

## BACK ISSUES

For any newcomers there are a lot of back issues still available. Just let me know if you would like to have a list of those available and prices.

the FOOD STAMP CHANGE NEWSLETTER is Edited and Published by Jerry F. Schimmel in July, October, January and April. Mavericks Editor is Alon Jeffrey, 366 Behm Dr. Grayslake IL 60030. For the year 1983-84 the subscription rate is \$4.50. Late subscribers receive all back issues for that year. All subscribers may submit a 30 word ad to be run free all year. Full page ads are \$8.50, half-pages are \$4.50, quarter pages are \$3.00. Copy must be submitted by June 15, Sep. 15, Dec. 15 and Mar. 15. Full page material must be no larger than 11x7 1/2 inches. Newsletters are mailed before the 10th of the month.

PLAY MONEY COINS: Am developing a book on these pieces, Information, samples, history, photos, etc. wanted. All letters answered. Richard F. Clothier, Rte. 8, Becket MA 01223.

Want to buy FSC Tokens from everywhere. Also want tokens & scrip from military bases everywhere. Hank Reidling, 8847 Liptonshire Ln, Dallas TX 75238

WEST INDIES (British, Danish, French, Dutch) collector eager to buy swap, correspond with other collectors sharing same interest. Specializing in cut, ctrstpd, coins and tokens. K.V. Eckardt, Box 653 Fajardo PR 00648

Wanted: FSC items from MISSOURI & COLORADO. Also Ration Material, Sambo's, Sales Tax Items, Prison Tokens. Geo. Van Trump Jr, Box 26523 Lakewood CO 80226-0523

Wanted: FSC tokens from PA, NY & Other states. Also "Good Fors" from NJ, NY, PA. etc. Dog Lice. Michael Weiss Jr, 3 Byrd St. Exeter PA 18643.

FSC Tokens: McDONALDS GROCERY, Greensboro IN, 1,5,10,25,50¢. Multi-colors - \$2 per set, or will trade. What do you have? Virginia King R#6 Columbia City IN 46725

SAMPLE FSC Tokens wanted. Also unusual sizes, shapes, colors & materials as TYPE tokens. Some trades available. Tom Conklin P.O. Box 440 Rutherford NJ 07070

Wood nickels from Brazoria Co., TEXAS, for your duplicate FSC tokens and scrip (prefer TEXAS). Ron Livingston P.O. Box 135 Lake Jackson TX 77566

Selling collection FSC 2295 Diff. pieces 1939-78. Many rarities, 48 states plus mint sheets, coupons, books mounted in 5 albums. \$1500. Send SASE for information Elmer Wright 805 Cactus Yuma AZ 85364



# FOOD STAMP CHANGE TOKENS AND SCRIP

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RHODE ISLAND tokens of all types wanted for research and listing. Describe and price to me. Have material to trade. S. Bertram Tabor, 50 North St. Cranston RI 02920.

Wanted: SOUTH DAKOTA and MAINE FSC and other exonomia items. Have some traders or will buy. Robert R. Maisch, P.O. Box 1328, Auburn ME 04210

Wanted: Trade Tokens and Wooden Nickels from CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, ALASKA, HAWAII and ARIZONA. J.L. McPheeters, 472 W. Monterey Av. Stockton CA 95204

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Wanted: Old ANIMAL LICENSES any state. Have large trading stock in tokens and other collectables and Dog Tags. Will buy one or complete collections of all types of exonomia. Clay Welty, 8410 W. 108th Av, Broomfield CO 80020

Wanted: FLORIDA FSC. Will trade other FLORIDA FSC. Also collect FL merchants tokens. Have traders from FL and other states. 10 dif. FL-FSC - \$4 plus SASE. Edw. R. Joyce, 5552 Riverton Rd., Jacksonville FL 32211

Wanted to buy or trade INDIANA FSC and all MOOSE LODGE tokens. Jack R. Smith, P.O. Box 26423, Lawrence IN 46226

Want KANSAS FSC and other KANSAS exonomia. I am still cataloguing SPORT SCHEDULE tokens. Am updating the SOAP TOKEN catalog. Your help appreciated. Jim Baum, 3101 N. Arkansas Av, Wichita KS 67204

PUERTO RICO! Will buy or trade FSC tokens and scrip, Hacienda and Merchants' Tokens, Paper Money Stocks and Bonds, Checks and Medals. Efraín Archilla, Box C, Humacao PR 00661

NEBRASKA FSC. Am now cataloguing. Please send your listings. Postage refunded. Catalog deadline Spring 1984. Geo. Hosek, 7411 Idleale Ln, Omaha NE 68112.

Wanted: MICHIGAN FSC. Will buy or have some traders. Also want MICHIGAN "Good For"s. Raymond E. Olson, 545 N. Harvey, Plymouth MI 48170

Your token, any kind! My SUNOCO, PIPER CUB, LONG JOHN SILVER, STANDARD or SHELL. Your choice while they last, then mine. Lloyd Andries, Jr. Box 264, Witt IL 62094

IOWA FSC and trade tokens are my specialty. Buy, trade for my collection. Trading is more fun. Lew Ferguson, 1605 Roosevelt Av, Ames IA 50010

NEW YORK STATE- FSC tokens wanted that are not listed in my catalog. Gary Pipher, P.O. Box 217, Johnson City NY 13790-0217